

## Lights, camera, action!

**New year brings  
new leadership**

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**GSU delivers  
Christmas compost**

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**Customer satisfaction:  
Fax or fiction?**

# PLAIN TALKS

January/February 1992 Volume 71 Number 1

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Jerry Irvine, lineman-1st class, Beaumont, prepares for another take in a commercial about recycled hardware. The spot is part of a new environmental ad campaign featuring GSU employees. For more information, see pages 8-9. Photo by Linka Peveto.



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Employees who change residences or offices should fill out company mailing-address-forms (GSU0012-00-81) and return them to the mailroom in Edison Plaza. GSU publications, departmental mailings and other company information are not automatically forwarded; addresses must be corrected when employees move.

## McKey exposes art through multi-images

by Scott Harper

Most everyone has a special means of expressing themselves. Some may paint, write or sing. Other expressions are found in cars, clothes and homes. For Bobby McKey, its multi-image photography.

"It's a way for me to express my view on a certain situation," says McKey, who works in the Zachary accounting department. "I try to reflect what's going on at the time."

Multi-image prints involve two or more negatives manipulated so as to create a double exposure effect in one print. "This type of print gets more attention," says McKey. "It gets people to stop and take a second look."

The Zachary native has been interested in photography for about eight years but got serious about it in the past five years. McKey is a graduate of the Al E. Woolley College of Photography.

He is a member of several camera clubs including The Louisiana Arts and Artists Guild. McKey enters state, national and international contests and over the years has accumulated 16 1st-place awards, 11 2nd-place awards, seven 3rd-place awards and nine honorable mentions.

McKey spends many hours in his darkroom at home. "I spend at least three to four nights a week trying to create. Sometimes, I'll go from 6:00 p.m. to 1:00 a.m.," he says. "It takes a lot of perseverance."

His printing style involves a very familiar process: trial and error. "Anything is worth trying. Sometimes I'll go through 15 or 20 images until I get the final print I'm looking for."

McKey recently had his first



*McKey with his first photography showing at the McHugh House Museum in Zachary.*

showing at the McHugh House Museum in Zachary. "They asked me for a photo display and, being a native of Zachary, I was glad to do it."

His work has been used on a professional level as well. "Splash," a national jet ski magazine, ran an advertisement with one of his photos. He also shot production stills for the movie, "The Pistol," and James Ryder, a nationally known make-up artist.

As for the future, McKey is content with photography as a "good hobby." "If I were to go into gallery photography, it would be like suicide. One out of every 10,000 people would like what I do and one out of every 100,000 would actually buy it."

"But you never know. One day it might be worth something. When I'm dead and gone," he laughs, "Someone may say, 'Hey, this guy was on to something.'"



*The multi-image process begins with two separate prints (top left and above). The negatives are then merged for a special effect found in the final product (left).*

## Donnelly elected CEO, chairman of the board

Joseph L. Donnelly has been elected chief executive officer of Gulf States, effective Jan. 6, 1992. On March 1 he also will become chairman of the board.

The announcement was made by Dr. E. Linn Draper, who is giving up his positions as GSU chairman, president and chief executive officer to become president of Ohio-based American Electric Power Co., the nation's second-largest electric utility.

Donnelly, who formerly served as senior executive vice president and chief financial officer, has been with the company 12 years.

"Joe Donnelly has been a key architect of Gulf States' continuing financial recovery," Draper said. He is an excellent choice to lead the company as it continues to deal with a variety of financial challenges."

Donnelly joined Gulf States in April 1979 as senior vice president of finance and became executive vice president of finance later the same year. He was elected senior executive vice president and chief financial officer in 1986 and later that year was elected to the company's board of directors.



Donnelly

"I deeply appreciate this new opportunity," Donnelly said. "I look forward to continuing to work closely with our board and all our employees to plan for the future needs of our company, our shareholders and our customers."

Draper also announced the promotions of A. F. (Tony) Gabrielle and Ronald W. Ciesiel. Gabrielle was promoted to vice president-special projects and Ciesiel to vice president-computer applications.

Gabrielle joined GSU in 1980 as vice president-computer applications. He previously spent 30 years with American Electric Power Co. in increasing levels of responsibility including vice president-computer applications. In his new position, Gabrielle reports directly to Ed Loggins, senior executive vice president for operations.

Ciesiel, a 17-year veteran of Gulf States, joined the company as an engineer in Conroe. Prior to his promotion, he subsequently held a variety of engineering and technical services positions including manager of engineering services and general manager of computer applications.



Gabrielle



Ciesiel

## Schenck named to top financial post

On Jan. 16 GSU Chief Executive Officer Joseph L. Donnelly announced the promotion of Jack L. Schenck to senior vice president and chief financial officer.

Schenck has been GSU's treasurer since 1981 when he joined the company. He previously spent 11 years with the Edison Electric Institute in various responsibilities including vice president for economic policy analysis. In his new job, Schenck reports to Donnelly, who formerly held the top financial post at Gulf States.

"Jack Schenck is ideally suited to be chief financial officer," Donnelly said. "He has played a leading role in helping the company get through some very difficult years and his diverse background and experience will be an important asset as we plan for the future."

Donnelly also announced three other promotions that affect the Finance Department.

Stephen K. Burton was promoted to vice president and treasurer. A 14-year veteran of Gulf States, Burton joined the company as an administrative accountant. He was previously employed at Arthur Andersen & Co., Dallas, as an audit staff accountant. At GSU, he has held increasing levels of responsibility including senior budget analyst, director-budgeting and control, and manager-technical accounting and budgeting.

Clyde W. McBride is now vice-president-strategic planning. McBride has been with GSU for 15 years in the finance area. He joined the company in 1977 as an engineer



*Schenck (seated) and (l to r), Burton, Galow and McBride were promoted to new positions.*

in the Rate Department. From there he was promoted to director-financial analysis and then assistant treasurer, both in Financial Services.

In another change, Geoffrey G. Galow was named assistant treasurer. Galow joined Gulf States as a student accountant in 1979. During the next 13 years, he held various accounting and financial positions, including accountant, staff accountant I, supervisor-investor services and director-shareholder services.

# GSU recyclers trim the trees

Pris Gallagher



L to R, GSU's Greg Kirchmayer, Billy Henderson, Bob Bager and Asplundh's Tommy Meyers, Alfred Davis and Joey Nadeau chop up trees in Denham Springs.

by Scott Harper

The transformation of a Christmas tree is amazing—and quick. All month, the tree is green and beautifully adorned with lights and ornaments, hovering over mysterious gifts and Christmas festivities, its soaring height challenged daily by the family cat. Then in a matter of hours, it becomes waste.

Thanks to Gulf States, citizens in Western, Port Arthur and Baton Rouge Divisions, had another alternative for disposing of their Christmas tree this year. GSU and its contract tree trimming companies collected discarded trees, chopped them up and gave away the bags of mulch.

In Western Division, recycling centers were set up in The Woodlands, Oakridge North and Shenandoah on Jan.

4. "We had a lot of trees donated," says Steve White, supervisor-right-of-way maintenance and procurement, Conroe. "Well over 2,000 trees were ground up."

After the trees were mulched, the chips were placed in clear plastic bags and tied with a GSU tag. "We gave away about 175 bags just in The Woodlands,"

says White.

This is the second year for the recycling project in Western Division. "Last year we were overwhelmed with the amount of trees people brought to us. This year we were better organized and kept up with what was going on," he says.

On Dec. 28 and Jan. 4, many Port Arthur and Mid-County area residents donated their trees for recycling. According to Danny Mallet, utility foreman-line, Port Arthur, they were glad they could make a contribution to the recycling effort and were happy to take home a bag of fresh mulch for the garden.

Apparently, the second week was when the big turn out hit. "I stopped by to see how things were going," says Sue Simon, senior energy auditor, Port Arthur. "There were people and trees everywhere. Toward the end of the day, one man came by and was shoveling the mulch in his truck. It was a great success." The project was so favorably received, plans are being made to do it again next Christmas.

Tree recycling efforts continued in Denham Springs. Working with Asplundh, the Denham Springs district ground up over 200 trees. The mulch was placed in bags stamped "Compliments of GSU" and tied with GSU tags.

"This first year was pretty successful," says Norman Kinsella, supervisor-contracts-vegetation, Baton Rouge. "We're planning for this to be an on-going project."

Employees in Port Arthur unload Christmas trees for mulching. Photo by Sue Simon.

# NISCO start-up on schedule with Nelson tie-in

story and photos by Mike Rodgers

Fans of the TV show "Star Trek" are accustomed to seeing crew members of the starship Enterprise use computer "touch screens" to operate the vessel in her journey across the galaxy in the 23rd century. Touch screens, operated by fingertips on a computer screen, are state-of-the-art here in the 20th century and are one of the many features which will be incorporated into the NISCO Project in Lake Charles when the fluidized bed combustors are placed in operation later this year.

NISCO, the Nelson Industrial Steam Company, a joint venture among Gulf States, Citgo, Conoco and VISTA Chemical, was formed to generate electricity for GSU and steam for industrial customers. The giant construction project is nearing the important tie-in phase. Generating units 1 and 2 at nearby Nelson Gas & Oil will be shut down for a 12-week outage. During that time, both units will be converted from burning natural gas to burning petroleum coke. Existing feedwater and steam lines will be tied into the fluidized bed combustors in which the petroleum coke fuel will be burned.

There are other major undertakings to make NISCO a reality. In addition to the major turbine generator overhaul, much electrical and instrumentation work lies ahead during the outage. "We must take a control system that was state-of-the-art several years ago and bring it up to today's standards," says Don Zierold, supervisor-fluidized bed combustion. "Everything will be tied into one system. Some 25 or

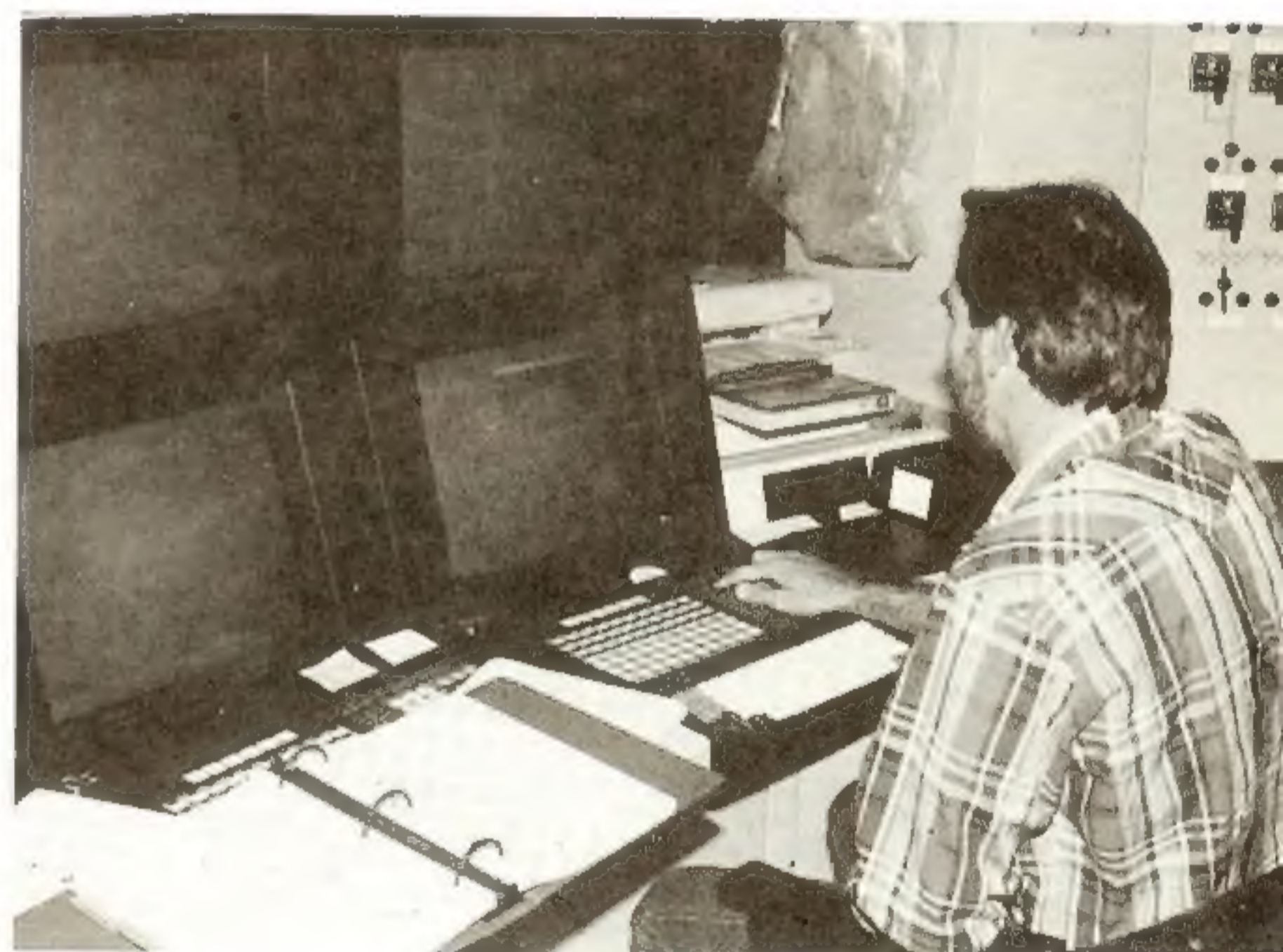
30 steam, water and air lines and 700 electrical and control wires will be brought together."

One primary goal during the time units 1 and 2 are down revolves around training the operators and the other employees who will run NISCO on a daily basis. According to Zierold, with new boiler technology, an advanced control system, a new baghouse, ash removal system and a material handling system to bring in the fuel, operators are in for some intensive classroom work. "They will receive hands-on training as each system is started up and tied in," says Zierold. The six-weeks of training for operations and maintenance personnel involves explanations of what each piece of equipment does, how to start it, how to maintain it and how to make repairs. Operators will control most functions of the project by touch screen.

"We're fighting hard to stay on top of an aggressive schedule and we're doing it," Zierold notes. Unit 1 was scheduled to go off-line near the end of January. The target date for shutdown of unit 2 is mid-February.



*The large pipe in the limestone preparation building carries the fuel mixture to the boilers at the NISCO project.*



*Jerry Hardy, instrument engineer for NISCO, checks readouts on the control panel.*

## Environmental campaign features employees in television advertisements

by Scott Harper

When you have a good story to tell, you tell it. That's exactly what Gulf States is doing with its new environmental ad campaign. The story: GSU cares about the environment and is helping to preserve it.

According to Henry Joyner, administrator-advertising and financial information, Beaumont, the ad campaign is the result of research. "In recent customer opinion surveys, concern for the environment was a major issue," says Joyner. "Our customers want us to do the right things environmentally and want to know about it."

As a result, four television commercials were produced to get the environmental message out. "There were plenty of things to talk about," says Joyner, "but the subjects we narrowed down to visually demonstrate our overall commitment to the environment."

The commercials were shot the third week of November and featured GSU employees. "We looked for employees who had something to do with our environmental program to deliver the message in the ad," says Joyner.

The kick-off spot features Dr. Linn Draper, chairman, who introduces GSU's Environmental

Affairs group and other employees who work in related areas. "We wanted to show customers that GSU has been involved in environmental activities since the 70s," says Joyner. "The commercial also stresses our

commitment to preserving and protecting the environment while producing electricity."

Jim Mutch, director-environmental affairs, Beaumont, who also appears in the spot, agrees, "While our main order of business is producing electricity, we have other obligations like protecting our environment and doing something positive for it when we can."

Interestingly, the commercial was shot at the Roy E. Larsen Sandyland Sanctuary, a preserved land area managed by The Texas Nature Conservancy near Silsbee, on land that was donated by Gulf States in 1978.

John Bernard, engineering analyst, Beaumont, was featured in a commercial about the wetlands management project being developed by employee volunteers at Sabine Station.

"I didn't really think about being in the commercial until I saw the cameras, grips and make-up," recalls Bernard. "It was just like Hollywood!"

On a Friday afternoon in 80-degree weather, they shot Bernard at the plant and on the

Henry Joyner



John Bernard on location for a TV spot explaining the Sabine Wildlife Refuge



The Environmental Affairs group "takes five" after filming at the Sandyland Sanctuary.



*Left, Production crews tape Jerry Irvine in a bucket truck for a spot about GSU's use of recycled hardware. Above, Myra Castello takes last minute suggestions from the commercial director in Lake Charles.*

following morning, they filmed at the marsh. Bernard had to wear the same clothes for both sessions so he would look the same in the finished spot. Unfortunately, that Friday night, a cold front blew in and dropped temperatures some 50 degrees.

"That morning I nearly froze," laughs Bernard. "The grips would throw me my coat when I would finish a segment."

"I thought the whole commercial was great," says Bernard of the completed project. "Rather than just talking, we're actually doing something."

Myra Castello, senior chemist, Nelson Coal, made her acting debut in an advertisement about how GSU reuses fly ash, a waste product of coal.

"I was really nervous, but the people in the crews eased my anxieties," says Castello. "I was out there about two hours. That's a long time for a 30-second ad!"

Castello feels the hardest part was actually being on camera. "You have to remember your lines, say them convincingly and follow the tape on the ground all at the same time while looking at the camera," she says. (The tape indicated where she should walk.)

"I'm my own worst critic," she says of her performance. "I noticed every time I blinked! But, everyone else said it was great."

Jerry Irvine, lineman-1st class, Beaumont, appeared in a commercial about GSU's use of recycled pole line hardware.

"It was a lot easier than I expected," says Irvine of the new experience. "I talk a lot so it was easy talking to the camera."

Aside from being the brunt of "make-up" jokes from his fellow crew members, Irvine's toughest part came when the film crew decided to change a word in his script.

"When you get something fixed in your mind, it's hard to change. It took me forever to change that word," laughs Irvine. "If they had changed a whole sentence, we'd probably still be out there!"

Irvine was happy with the results. "I'm an environmentalist myself and it felt good to take part in something I believe in."

"Honestly, I think these ads will help our relations with customers and industry. If people see a major company doing something to help the environment, they might do something, too," he says.

Joyner was pleased with the employees' performances. "They all did a fantastic job," says Joyner.

The kick-off spot began running in January and the others will air throughout the year. There is a possibility one or two more spots may be produced.

"I think the message that GSU is concerned about the environment is clear in all the commercials," says Mutch.

"We knew we had a good environmental story to tell," concludes Joyner. "GSU has always been a good environmental corporate citizen."

# New procedure manuals clearly explain power plant operations

story and photo by Robert Adams



*Sonny Powell, equipment operator, Sabine Station, compares a drawing with the "baby bowser" of the boiler feed pump turbine on Unit #4.*

At the end of 1991, GSU's Production Training group finished almost 11 years of work by writing new operating procedures for 21 of GSU's power plant units. The procedures for Sabine Units 1 and 2 were the last two to be written as part of the Power Plant Operator Procedures that began in 1981.

The program clearly defines how a power plant system should be started up, operated and shut down. Then, it uses these detailed procedures both as a training and working tool for operators to do their job.

Imagine buying a new car or VCR and the only instructions on how to run it are from the design engineer's drawings or by talking to someone who has used it.

"One hundred percent on-the-job training is how GSU used to train operators," says Fred Kressman, senior production training specialist. "When someone was hired, they were trained by those already on the job, using the manufacturer's 'as-built' drawings and manuals."

But in 1979, an Electrical Power Research Institute survey showed almost 25 percent of power plant unscheduled outages resulted from human error. GSU's own number of forced outages agreed with the national survey.

As a result, GSU decided in 1981 to change how power plant operators were trained. The Power Plant Operator Training program was formed.

Paul Jones, director - production & T&D training, says the program's objectives include writing the operating procedures in layman's terms to achieve the "safest and most efficient method to operate the plant."

Writing the procedures involves a team effort, using vendor's original drawings, subject matter experts, training department personnel and plant operators. Other groups helping in the process include drafting, reproduction and the stenographic pool.

Once a unit's operating procedures are written, operators learn how to run the unit using the newly-written procedures. The program sets goals, evaluates and guides participants as they progress through the program.

The program uses the unit's operating procedures as the basic text for on-the-job training. This reinforces the procedure's use by operators. Information is broken into small components for ease of learning. Each operator's training progress is reviewed and approved by the operator's immediate supervisors. Also, a review

panel consisting of up to four levels of supervision is in place to spot-check operators' progress.

Kressman says the training program is very active. Every month, each operator in training participates in the program and their progress is reported to upper management. "Operators accomplish in two years what it took me 10 years to learn," he says. "The structured on-the-job training cuts operator training time to about one-fifth of what it has been in the past."

Some benefits to GSU include improved unit and equipment efficiency, reliability and employee safety.

Even though GSU has completed writing the procedures for 21 units, the operator training program continues.

Also, the Procedures Development and Procedures Training process has been expanded into instrument and control maintenance, and the mechanical maintenance area.

Jones credits the success of the training program to getting the operators involved with the writing process. "The people who will use the procedures help to develop them," says Jones. "The operators take ownership of their procedures. The Training group administers the program, but ownership of the procedures belongs to the plant operators."

GSU's power plant efficiency has improved over the last 10 years. "New control systems, upgraded equipment, even the way we fire the boilers have all helped to improve our efficiency," says Jones. He adds that the new operator training program is a significant part of this improvement.

## GSU recognizes shining stars

by Debi Russell

In the 60s and 70s, many companies, including Gulf States had a sales force or sales department that introduced the customer to the latest technologies. The birth of a new sales force emerged revealing the "salesman" of the 80s. As we approach a new century more and more corporations are getting the big picture of total employee involvement, including their sales force.

Gulf States has 4,800+ potential sales people promoting a quality product. A serviceman in a hard hat has become a security light salesman. A contact clerk or cashier in the lobby promotes energy efficient electric water heating. A district service representative sells the concept of energy efficient heat pumps to the homebuilder. Everyone is a part of the new sales team.

Within companies with a sales force such as IBM, New York Life or Xerox, there is always a small group that stands out from the rest. They are the shining stars of the company. GSU has its own shining stars. On Nov. 1, 18 employees were recognized by Dr. Linn Draper, chairman, and a host of vice presidents. These employees exemplify an attitude that not only meets the objective of the company but, delivers a win-win message to the customer.

The recognized employees are responsible for over \$400,000 in new annual revenue generated by their participation in the Reddy Referral program. That represents approximately 25 percent of the new revenue generated by the 800 employees participating in the 1991 Reddy Referral program. Congratulations for a job well done!



*Darrell "Goody" Goodwin (right), district service representative, Jennings, was recognized by Dr. Linn Draper, chairman, as the employee who has generated more new revenue than any other employee by participating in the Reddy Referrals program.*

### RECOGNIZED EMPLOYEES (Employee, Division)

Michael Allen, Baton Rouge  
Alene Cole, Beaumont  
Sharon Davis, Beaumont  
Shirley Godeaux, Beaumont  
Darrell Goodwin, Lake Charles  
Stanley Guillory, Lake Charles  
Rhonda Haskins, Beaumont  
Dorothy Hobbs, Beaumont  
Susan Holeman, Baton Rouge  
Wanda Lamberth, Lake Charles  
Charles Loewenthal, Baton Rouge  
Audrey McDonald, Beaumont  
James Morgan, Beaumont  
Debbie Morrison Cowart, Beaumont  
Dan Puckett, Beaumont  
Suzanne Rigby, Beaumont  
Linda Thornton, Western  
Johnny Trahan, Beaumont

## Stick with the fax for customer satisfaction

story and photo by Susan Gilley

Fax machines and computers are revolutionizing the way companies do business. At GSU, such electronic innovations are helping to increase customer satisfaction.

Since mid-1991, the company has been faxing courtesy bills to several large industrial customers, reported Steve Brouillette, formerly GSU's supervisor-system billing. Brouillette, who chairs the Large Power Billing Committee, said customers were requesting billing information as soon as it became available because bills sent through the mail were not arriving soon enough to meet their needs. Earlier delivery enabled them to better monitor their energy usage and to expedite payment processing.

Programming done by Janet Strahan, systems analyst, as part of a switch to a letter-size bill format for industrial customers set the groundwork for tying the fax distribution to the mainframe, explained James Turner, supervisor-application systems. Once the billing information was made available on the mainframe, then the information could be faxed to customers.

Fifty-two bills are now faxed, although some customers receive more than one bill.

Although Turner said refinements are still being made to the hardware, he added, "We feel good about the quality of the

product." The program automatically adds a GSU logo to the courtesy bill to distinguish it from the official bill.

Once the billing information is compiled, System Billing checks each bill for accuracy. Finally, a single command begins the process of faxing the bills to the various destinations. Although the actual paper bill is not faxed out, the result on the receiving end is printed out as an 8-1/2-by-11-inch document featuring the company logo and containing all billing information. In addition to the System Billing faxes, field representatives of the Marketing Department may also access the program to send specially-requested copies of bills to individual industrial customers.

"Our biggest benefit derives from the increased customer satisfaction, but we also benefit from improved cash flow," explained Brouillette. For instance, one company that asked to receive faxed bills usually had to pay late charges because their bills had to be routed through a corporate office in another state. That customer eliminated the late fees, and GSU receives their payments on a more timely basis.

Although participating customers receive a traditional bill through the mail, some prefer to simply process the faxed bill.

The system used to distribute courtesy bills by fax has already been put to another use: Purchasing now faxes purchase orders to vendors in the middle of the night without human intervention. As of mid-January, more than 2,500 had been sent out since September.



*Carol Hamilton, senior billing clerk, Beaumont, initiates fax distribution to industrial customers off the mainframe.*

# ON THE MOVE

## Promotions from December 1 - 31, 1991

**Arendt, Tina T.**, Nelson Station, to repairman 2nd class, Plant Production (8).

**Borneman, Kevin R.**, River Bend Nuclear Group, to senior technical specialist, RBNG-Plant Operations (3).

**Bougeus, Peggy C.**, River Bend Nuclear Group, to radiation protection technician 2nd class, RBNG-Plant Production (2).

**Caswell, Robert L., Jr.**, Lake Charles, to lineman 2nd class, Electric T&D (9).

**Causey, Michael R.**, River Bend Nuclear Group, to senior technical specialist, RBNG-Plant Operations (6).

**Collignon, George R.**, Baton Rouge, to serviceman 2nd class, Gas Department (10).

**Corley, Johnnie R.**, Louisiana Station, to head fireman, Plant Production (20).

**Davis, Lynnette A.**, Conroe, to customer contact clerk, Division Accounting (3).

**Desai, Shyamkant V.**, River Bend Nuclear Group, to principal engineer, RBNG-Oversight (1).

**Doucet, Billy J.**, Nelson

Gas & Oil Station, to control operations foreman, Plant Production (12).

**Ellis, Edward L., Jr.**, Baton Rouge, to apprentice, Gas Department (10).

**Firor, Edward L.**, Louisiana Station, to planning coordinator, Plant Production (6).

**Frederick, Nolan F.**, Beaumont, to mechanical engineer, Design Engineering (2).

**Goudeau, Jeffrey R.**, River Bend Nuclear Group, to radiation protection foreman, RBNG-Plant Operations (6).

**Gulley, Jeffrey B.**, Baton Rouge, to apprentice, Gas Department (10).

**Hebert, Warren H., Jr.**, Lafayette, to building technician, Electric T&D (10).

**Lagarde, Charles, Jr.**, Baton Rouge, to apprentice, Gas Department (11).

**Lambert, Benny**, Louisiana Station, to head fireman, Plant Production (19).

**Lintzen, Gregory K.**, Lake Charles, to relayman 1st class, Electric T&D (10).

**Malveaux, Anthony**, Lake

Charles, to utility foreman, Electric T&D (21).

**Martinez, Raymond J.**, River Bend Nuclear Group, to nuclear training representative, RBNG-Administration (5).

**McGrew, Alan J.**, Louisiana Station, to head fireman, Plant Production (23).

**Meinert, Raymond S.**, Beaumont, to senior systems analyst, Computer Applications (1).

**Panepinto, Donald R.**, Baton Rouge, to storeroom assistant, Electric T&D (12).

**Smiles, Raymond, Jr.**, Louisiana Station, to head fireman, Plant Production (18).

**Soileau, William D.**, Lake Charles, to engineering assistant, Electric T&D (1).

**Willis, Calvin D.**, River Bend Nuclear Group, to building and grounds maintenance man, RBNG-Administration (1).

**Willis, Edward L., Jr.**, Baton Rouge, to apprentice, Gas Department (11).

( ) denotes years of service

## SERVICE ANNIVERSARIES

*December*

# 1991

### 40 YEARS

**Paul Lamar Jr.**  
Electric T&D  
Beaumont

### 20 YEARS

**Wilbert Brooks Jr.**  
Electric T&D  
Baton Rouge

**David N. Fontenot**  
Electric T&D  
Baton Rouge

**Hardy B. Lee Jr.**  
Gas Department  
Baton Rouge

### 10 YEARS

**David A. Douglass**  
Electric T&D  
Dayton



# MAILBOX



*The Reddy Rhythms perform their 1991 Christmas Music Revue at Schlesinger's Geriatric Center in Beaumont.*

## Singing praises

"I thought Gulf States needed to know that the Reddy Rhythms are the **best PR** Gulf States could buy anywhere," writes Helen Johnsen, Beaumont, to **Ed Loggins**, senior executive vice president-operations, Beaumont. "I'm quite sure your people already knew that but I thought perhaps it would be good to hear from someone that did not begin with a 'bias'.

"...They all seem to have so much fun. Nothing I've seen on television is nearly as good, sort of 'laid-back' professionals."

*The Reddy Rhythms is a volunteer entertainment group located in Beaumont.*

## Free fair assistance

**Sue Williams**, supervisor-customer services, Port Arthur, and **JoNell Barrett**, customer information coordinator, Beaumont, received this thank you letter from Kim Trahan, Marshall Middle School student, Beaumont:

"Thank you for all the time you put in to put together the science fair booklets. They gave many helpful hints on how to have a good science fair project. I will use mine even more when I do my bibliography and acknowledgements page.

"I think it was very nice for the two of you and GSU to work together to provide us with these for free. Thanks so much!"

## Refrigerator response

**Jerry McHam**, superintendent, Navasota, recieved a letter of thanks from Harry Kocian, customer, Montgomery.

Last December, Kocian had returned home after vacation to find electrical service had stopped in some areas of his home. His refrigerator and freezer had been affected and the contents of both appliances were no longer cold or frozen.

He then contacted a contractor friend who preliminarily checked his breaker box, determined one power leg to be under normal voltage and advised Kocian to contact Gulf States.

"In less than an hour your serviceman arrived, confirmed the suspected problem and arranged for temporary service to be restored.

"...I talked with you and advised you of the value of the refrigerator's spoiled contents for reimbursement purposes. At that time, I stated my appreciation for Gulf States' prompt and courteous response to the emergency.

"This note is to confirm the total situation. I also want to put on record, the fact that from the lady who received my phone call to the serviceman who handled the problem, everyone involved did a commendable job. Thank you."

*Receiving the phone call was Sharon Williams, division substation operator, Conroe, and the serviceman was Tim Evans, serviceman-1st class, Conroe.*

## Useful information

"I just wanted you to know how much I appreciated the information that you sent me," writes student Jessica Avery, Lafayette, to **Sandra Gaspard**, senior energy auditor, Beaumont. "It helped out a great deal on my science project."

## Busy bee compassion

Donna Britt, WAFB Channel 9 Television, Baton Rouge, sent the following letter to **Dr. Linn Draper**, chairman and president, Beaumont:

"I think you should know it when employees show outstanding compassion for the customers.

"I had received a call from an elderly woman on North 8th Street in Baton Rouge who had been turned down by LSU and the city when she asked to have some bees removed from a tree. She is poor and couldn't afford to hire Terminix. I found an amateur beekeeper willing to take the bees but they were too high to reach, even with a ladder.

"One call to your service department found a friendly woman who found help within the hour. **Dwayne Breaux** and his crew (including Mr. Rhorer) were not only responsive, they were cheerful, polite and bowled us over with their caring.

"It's wonderful to know a big company can have a warm heart. My congratulations to you and keep up the good work!"

*Breaux is service foreman and Walter Rhorer is lineman-1st class, both in Baton Rouge.*

## Environmentally speaking

Stephanie A. Ellis, landscape contractor, St. Gabriel, La., sent this letter to **Dr. Linn Draper**, chairman, Beaumont, after viewing a new environmental advertisement:

"...I say what I feel is right, and I consider myself to be a pro-business environmentalist... I think that only by everyone taking responsibility for our planet can we hope to save it. The environmental ball is in everyone's court. I am proud to have Gulf States as a client."

*(see related story on p.8)*

# Our people make the difference

by Kim McMurray

We've known all along that the employees of GSU are special people. They—more accurately, you—work hard on the job to satisfy our customers and devote many hours away from the job to a variety of worthwhile causes.

Virtually every issue of **Plain Talks** includes letters from customers who generally have had pleasant encounters with Gulf States. That doesn't mean they thought the pole-mounted transformer behind their house was exceedingly attractive or that the electricity they received on a certain day was of especially good quality. It means they came in contact with a Gulf States employee—maybe it was you—and the experience was so positive that they took the time to write a note or letter.

The company's surveys show that customers usually feel good about the way they are treated by our employees even though the outcome may not be totally to their liking. Statistics are one thing; when customers take the time to write personal thank-you's, you know they were impressed.

On the cover of this issue, there's a photo of Jerry Irvine, a Beaumont lineman-1st class who's one of several employees featured in four new television commercials focusing on GSU's environmental activities. Irvine and all the employees who appear in the ads come across as committed and concerned.

But Jerry Irvine is much more than a budding TV star. He's a prime example of the kind of employee who



prompts people to write letters and even newspaper columns.

Sometime last fall, two line crews were sent to a job in Beaumont's West End. John Cowart's crew included Sloan Holland, Andrew Jackson and Jerry Irvine while Morris Jenkins' crew included Ben Parks and John Warner. As they worked, they were observed by Gordon Baxter, a well-known author who's had several books published, writes a column for **Flying** magazine and several newspapers and used to be featured on National Public Radio.

Baxter was paying very close attention. He not only mentioned them in a letter to me; he also devoted an entire newspaper column to what he saw. The piece, which appeared in December in the Port Arthur News and other newspapers, is reprinted on this page. In his letter to me, Baxter talked about the lineman (I'm told it was Irvine) who came to his door and said a rotten pole needed to be replaced in the easement behind his house. Baxter said the "very fine looking lineman" was "a model of good manners" and that, after watching them work, he "felt warmly toward their skills and their manners too."

Everything that's said about the company and its employees isn't positive, of course. But the news media already does a good job of accentuating the negative. This, as Paul Harvey says, is the rest of the story:

## Linemen have tough, scary job

by Gordon Baxter

It's a cold, clear dog-barking day at this writing and outside I hear angry buzzing like a mad 40-foot bumblebee. It's a light-weight chain saw and the guy is about 100 feet up in a great big pine tree.

There's a tree service crew working out there in a real tight little backyard space. I don't know a thing about the profession of these guys, but let me tell you what I can see.

First, how many men do you know who can strap on a pair of pole-climbing spurs and go up a 140-foot tree? And once you are up there and satisfied your spurs are dug in good, would you lean back? Lean back in your harness and be able to get that chain saw swinging off your belt and start the little monster and start cutting about eye level.

You ever use a chain saw on a log just lying flat and tame on the ground and you standing on both feet? A straight, even cut is almost impossible. The darn thing jerks, jams, binds and stalls.

Would you use one 100 feet up a pine with its blade throwing a hurricane of chips at you as it digs into the tree a few inches away from that tender rigging you are leaning back on?

To give the job a little extra zest, all this is taking place within touching distance of some high voltage power lines. Covers

are thrown over the thick electric cables, but the guy is cutting off a six-foot section of tree trunk above his head.

One mistake and he goes straight to heaven in a blaze of glory.

He's got two swampers tailed out on a rope tied up at the top. Their hope is nothing kicks back and hits the lines or pivots and goes through the roof, but will just lean toward the strain and fall like a good tree trunk should.

"Whump-pp," it hits the ground, a few hundred pounds, they all shout, high thin rebel yells and laughter. They got away with it one more time.

That's the second tall tree for the contractors. Before that the Gulf States Utilities line crew replaced a rotten pole in there between houses and restrung those high tension lines.

Listening to those linemen work was music. They sang their calls back and forth, nothing moved until every voice was heard, high thin yells and laughter here, too.

Relaxed, strong and sure of each other, inches away from sudden death. When the lights go out, never cuss a lineman.

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*Jerry Irvine, lineman-1st class, Beaumont, in the final scene of a television commercial that describes Gulf States' use of recycled hardware. The commercial is one of a series of environmental advertisements designed to inform the public of GSU's efforts to protect the environment. For more information, see pages 8-9.*



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